

We claim:

1. A disposable pillow comprising:

5 a single sheet folded along a medial line, to form two side walls; separated by a marginal edge;

a second, third and fourth marginal edge formed by sealing the two side walls around a perimeter of the folded single sheet to create a seal;

10 a check valve located between the two side walls in one of the second, third or fourth marginal edges, so as to locally break the marginal edge seal where the check valve is located;

15 wherein the check valve has an exterior opening and an interior opening, the width of the exterior opening gradually decreasing toward an interior volume of the disposable pillow.

2. The disposable pillow of claim 1 further including a tube removably attached to an exterior surface of one of the two side walls.

20 3. The disposable pillow of claim 1 wherein the single sheet is comprised of a multiple ply material, and the outermost ply is an absorbent material.

4. The disposable pillow of claim 3 wherein the absorbent material is a nonwoven fabric.

5 5. The disposable pillow of claim 3 wherein the absorbent material is paper.

6. The disposable pillow of claim 1 wherein the check valve has a side located between the exterior opening and the interior opening, the side being coincidental with the seal in one of the at least one marginal edges to prevent the check valve from  
10 inverting at high pressures.

7. The disposable pillow of claim 1 further including an outer covering coupled to at least one of the two side walls.

15 8. The disposable pillow of claim 1 wherein the medial line is cut to form the single sheet into two sheets.

9. The disposable pillow of claim 1 wherein the check valve has a width of at least 8.9 cm.

20 10. The disposable pillow of claim 9 wherein the check valve has a length of at least 11.4 cm, and has an exterior opening that extends from the marginal edge seal where the check valve is located.

11. A disposable pillow comprising:

two sheets stacked and registered to form two side walls;

5 at least one marginal edge formed by sealing the perimeter of the two sheets to create a seal;

a flat check valve located between the two side walls in the at least one marginal edge, so as to locally break the marginal edge seal where the check valve is located;

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wherein the check valve has an exterior opening and an interior opening, the width of the exterior opening gradually decreasing toward an interior volume of the disposable pillow.

15 12. The disposable pillow of claim 11 further including a tube removably attached to an exterior surface of one of the two side walls.

13. The disposable pillow of claim 11 wherein at least one of the two sheets is comprised of a multiple ply material having an outermost ply of an absorbent material.

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14. The disposable pillow of claim 13 wherein the absorbent material is a nonwoven fabric.

15. The disposable pillow of claim 13 wherein the absorbent material is paper.

16. The disposable pillow of claim 11 wherein the check valve has a side located  
5 between the exterior opening and the interior opening, the side being coincidental  
with the seal in the at least one marginal edge to prevent the check valve from  
inverting at high pressures.

17. The disposable pillow of claim 11 further including an outer covering coupled to  
10 the two side walls.

18. A method of manufacturing an inflatable article comprising the steps of:

stacking and registering two sheets of flexible material together;

placing a flexible flat check valve between the two sheets of material, the check  
15 valve having an exterior opening and an interior opening, the width of the  
exterior opening gradually decreasing toward an interior volume of the  
disposable pillow;

positioning the check valve so that the exterior opening is coincidental with a  
first edge of the two sheets; and

20 sealing the two sheets of material together to form a seal around the perimeter of  
the two sheets of material, without sealing closed the exterior opening of the  
check valve.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the check valve is substantially rectangular in shape, and has a side located between the exterior opening and the interior opening that is coincidental with the seal.

5        20. The method of claim 18 further including the step of attaching a tube for inflating the article to an exterior surface of one of the two sheets of material.

21. The method of claim 18 further including the step of attaching an outer covering to at least one of the two sheets of material.

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22. A check valve for use in an inflatable article, the check valve comprising:

a first side portion;

a second side portion registered with the first side portion and sealed along two opposite edges to form a first side seal and a second side seal, and creating a top

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opening and a bottom opening;

a first valve seal extending from the first side seal to the bottom opening;

a second valve seal extending from the second side seal to the bottom opening;

wherein the first valve seal and second valve seal converge at the bottom opening.

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23. The check valve of claim 22 wherein the first valve seal extends from the first side seal at the top opening, and the a second valve seal extends from the second side seal at the top opening.

24. The check valve of claim 23 wherein the first valve seal and the second valve seal are symmetrically positioned on the check valve.

5 25. The check valve of claim 22 wherein the length of the check valve measured at the first side seal and the second side seal is at least 11.4 cm.

26. The check valve of claim 22 wherein the width of the check valve measured between the first side seal and the second side seal is at least 8.9 cm.

10 27. The check valve of claim 26 wherein the first valve seal and the second valve seal serves to effectively narrow the bottom opening to a width of 2.54 cm.